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WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

A few of the many evidences, in proof of the fitness of William H. Harrison, *for President of the United States in* 1840,—*embracing a short history of his life, addressed to the Freemen of the United States.*

The distinguished soldier, patriot, and statesman, who is the subject of this notice, is descended from one of the most illustrious families of that mother of statesmen, Virginia. His father was one of the delegates from that commonwealth to, and a leading member of the memorable revolutionary congress. When John Hancock was elected President of that body, and hesitated, through modesty, to take his seat, Mr. Harrison being a large man, seized Mr. Hancock, who was small, and carried him and placed him in the chair; observing, that they would "let Mother Britain know that congress would have the man she proscribed to preside over them." During the revolution he was chairman of the committee of foreign affairs and was great among the great men of that day. In 1783, he was appointed Governor of his native state, and was one of the most popular Chief Magistrates that ever presided over that commonwealth. He died in 1791, leaving three sons, of whom the subject of this short biographical notice was the youngest.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, was born at the family seat, called Berkley, twenty-five miles below Richmond, on James River, on the 9th of February, 1773; two years before the commencement of the American Revolution. His early education was at a Grammar School, and afterwards at an Academy in Southampton county, and at the College of Hampden Sidney. After the completion of his academical studies, he was placed by his father in his seventeenth year, in the office of Dr. Leiper, a physician of Richmond, as a medical student. After remaining there one year, he went to Philadelphia for the purpose of com-

pleting his medical studies. But before he reached the city, his father died: he now resolved to quit the medical profession, having entered it, only to gratify his parent. Being born and educated in the stormy period of the revolution, the stiring events of that day had made too strong an impression upon his ardent mind, to relish the routine of a profession. But the small estate, which fell to him from his father, made it necessary for him to engage in active life.

His father's standing, character, and public services secured him many powerful friends, among whom, were Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, in the administration of Gen. Washington: Gen. Henry Lee, and Robert Morris, the financier of the revolution. Mr. Randolph offered him a place in his office, and Gen. Lee proposed to him a commission in the army. He accepted the military offer, and lest his friends should disapprove of the choice, attempted to conceal it from them, until all was settled. Mr. Morris, however, heard of it by chance, and sent for him, in order to dissuade him from it. Young Harrison suspected the cause of the summons, and having made up his mind to enter the army, hastened to the War Office, receiving his commission, and then repaired to the house of Mr. Morris to receive his advice when too late, to enter the office of the Secretary of State.

He received the commission of Ensign, in the first regiment of the United States Artillery, then at Fort Washington, the site of the present city of Cincinnati, and immediately set out to join the army, and reached it in a few days after Gen. St. Clair's memorable defeat.

He was at that time but nineteen years of age, tall, slender, and apparently wholly unsuited, from the tenderness and luxuriousness of his education, to brave the storms, encounter the hardships and perils, and battle with the beasts and savages of the wilderness. At that time the great valley of the Ohio and Mississippi, now filled with millions of civilized men, was roamed over by countless nations of hostile Indians, and the mighty rivers, now covered with a hundred steamers, were navigated only by the light canoe. The subdued and humble red man, that has now reluctantly retired beyond the Mississippi, then stood in power upon

the banks of the Ohio, the Muskingum, the Sciota, the Miami, the Wabash and the Illinois. Gen. St. Clair's army having been defeated and cut to pieces, the whole defence of this portion of the frontier devolved upon a small body of men. It was just at the beginning of winter, and such were the hardships in prospect, in this then distant wilderness, surrounded by an exasperated, victorious, savage foe, that the stoutest hearts might have failed, and the hardiest veteran turned pale. Some of his comrades advised the youthful, and unhardened ensign to resign his commission and take to civil life. But young Harrison's was not a spirit to recoil at danger. The same persevering energy and boldness of character, that distinguished him in after times, was here displayed in his contempt of inglorious ease, and love of arduous enterprise. The first duty confided to him, was to guard certain pack-horses, bound to Fort Hamilton. His duty was peculiarly uncomfortable, perilous and difficult, leading to great exposure night and day, and calling for much sagacity, and far more skill than would be looked for in a mere stripling. This duty he performed in a manner, which proved that his abilities were equal to his spirit, and called forth the thanks of Gen. St. Clair.

At this time intemperance destroyed a large proportion of the young men, that entered the army. The hardships and fatigues to which they were exposed, and above all the fashionable customs of the day, reduced at last to the slavery of the bowl, many of the finest young men that entered the service. But our young ensign, strengthened by the advice of Gen. Wilkinson, who succeeded St. Clair, in 1792, resisted temptation, and laid the foundation of those habits of temperance, which have characterised him through a long life, and which undoubtedly enabled him, as much as any other cause, to undergo the privations of a frontier warfare, amid the heats of summer, and the frosts of winter, in the swamps and impenetrable wilderness of the northwest.

In 1792, he was promoted to the office of Lieutenant, and in 1793, joined the army of Gen. Wayne. He was shortly after appointed Aid-de-camp, to that gallant commander. He acted in this capacity, in the battle of the twentieth of August, upon the Maumee, which resulted in

the decisive victory over the savages; and his coolness, intrepidity and bravery, were such as to call forth from Gen. Wayne the strongest expressions of applause.

In 1795, he was raised to the post of Captain, and on the departure of Gen. Wayne for the East, was entrusted with the command of Fort Washington. An end being put to the Indian war by the victory of Wayne, Captain Harrison married the daughter of John Cleves Symmes, the well known purchaser of the Miami country, and in 1797 left the army and was appointed Secretary of the Northwestern Territory. In 1799. he was elected as a delegate to Congress from this Territory, which then comprised Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and the whole country north of the Ohio, and east of the Mississippi rivers. While he was in Congress, he originated the present system of land sales, which has been of immense benefit to the whole country.

When Ohio was made a state, Mr. Harrison was appointed Governor of Indiana, and removed to Vincennes in 1801. He continued Governor until 1812, and was then appointed by Mr. Madison, Commander-in-Chief of the Northwestern Army. The following eloquent and able appeal to the patriotism of the West and the whole Union shows the principles, the talents and patriotic devotion to country, of the man, who afterwards won the title of the Washington of the West.

Extract of Gov. Harrison's Speech, while Governor of Indiana, to the Legislature of that State, delivered on the 18th of August, 1807.

"I should fail to do justice to my feelings, and perhaps disappoint your expectations, gentlemen, should I neglect, on this occasion, to mention a subject which has greatly agitated our country, and called forth the warmest expressions of patriotic ardor from every class of its citizens.

"The United States, true to those principles which ought to prevail in every Republic, preferring happiness to splendor, and safety to glory, have endeavored to abstract themselves from the entangling politics of Europe, and, by observing the most perfect neutrality to keep clear of all those bloody wars, which have so long desolated the finest quarter of the globe. The justice and impartiality of her conduct towards the belligerants, have not however, been re-

ciprocated; and from one of those powers, insult and injury have followed each other in quick succession, and promised satisfaction been anticipated by further outrage. The ships of our merchants, pursuing a legal commerce upon that ocean to which all have an equal right, have been captured and plundered, and their men impressed to serve a foreign tyrant, and shed their blood in battles, in which they have no interest. For these aggressions, our government, without mingling with its politics those passions which agitate the breasts of monarchs and which produce the greater part of those wars which overwhelm their unhappy subjects in misery and ruin, have demanded redress but in vain. Still calculating, however, upon the existence of a better disposition, on the part of a power which had injured us, *that last resort*, which is literally a "trial of who can do the other the most harm," was deprecated by the people as well as by the Government; and, so long as there remained the most distant hope of an amicable adjustment, argument and negotiation were thought preferable to war. This delusion has, however, passed away, and given place to the opinion that moderation and forbearance, have been mistaken for timidity and fear. Some nations, like some individuals, will not profit by the lessons of experience. Great Britain might have remembered that the arms of America were not palsied by the previous use of remonstrances. A blind fatuity hurries her on to that destruction which America had no wish to accelerate; and, an act of tyranny and injustice, surpassing any thing that can be found even in the history of her depredations upon neutrals, has converted a useful friend into a foe, able to punish her for her multiplied aggressions. The blood rises in my cheek, when I reflect on the humiliating, the disgraceful scene of the crew of an American ship of war, mustered on its own decks by a British Lieutenant for the purpose of selecting the innocent victims of British tyranny. But an act of this kind was perhaps necessary to convince all our fellow-citizens, that they had nothing to expect from British generosity or justice, when they were opposed to British interests. The unheard of outrage has made a deep impression upon the American mind. Citizens of every political denomination are rallying around the standard of their

country ; and pledging their lives and fortunes in support of their rights.

"I should do injustice to the well known patriotism of our territory, to suppose that either yourselves or your constituents gentlemen, felt less on this interesting occasion than the rest of your countrymen.

"We are, from our situation, peculiarly interested in the contest which is likely to ensue ; for who does not know that the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage are always employed as the instruments of British vengeance. At this moment, fellow-citizens, as I sincerely believe, their agents are organizing a combination amongst the Indians within our limits for the purpose of assassination and murder. And if these, their worthy allies, are not let loose to slaughter our women and children it will not proceed from the humanity and mercy of a nation which vainly boasts of her attainments in every art and science.

"At this important crisis but one sentiment should animate the breast of every true American ; disregarding every personal consideration, he should think only of the tie that binds him to his country ; confiding in the wisdom and firmness of his government, he should patiently wait the signal which calls him to the field. How deep the humiliation, how lasting the disgrace, how injurious to the cause of republicanism, should the blood of our murdered fellow-citizens remain unsatisfied or unrevenged. But it cannot be. Americans must prize too highly their dear bought rights, tamely to surrender them to the proud nation from which they were wrested. A beneficent and discriminating Providence will make us the objects of its peculiar care. Another Washington will arise to lead our armies to victory and glory, and the tyrants of the world will be taught the useful lessons that a nation of freemen are not to be injured with impunity."

Thus spoke the patriot HARRISON, the very man who was called by the country to lead our armies to victory and glory.

Before his appointment of Major General as Governor of Indiana, he commanded in person the troops raised for the defence of the frontiers and to avenge the Indian murders, which had been committed by British instigation, upon the

inhabitants of our western settlements. When Governor, he fought and gained the bloody battle of Tippecanoe, upon the Wabash.

Tecumseh, and his brother, the Prophet, had the address to bring about a combination of several Indian tribes against the United States. A number of outrages had been perpetrated, and the most shocking murders committed. Governor Harrison at the head of the Indiana militia, a small body of the United States troops, and a detachment of the Kentucky militia and volunteers, marched to the Prophet's town upon the Wabash, in order to break up the Indian league, or chastise the savages into submission. The Shawanoe Prophet, had collected a large number of warriors, armed with British muskets, and supplied with British powder, and inspired them with a belief of a certain conquest with the whites. By a rapid march, and somewhat circuitous route, Gov. Harrison suddenly appeared before the Prophet's town, and encamped upon the Tippecanoe, a tributary of the Wabash, on the 6th of November, 1811. The troops were ordered to sleep upon their arms, and arrangements made in case of an attack in the night. At half past 4 o'clock in the morning of the 7th, Gov. Harrison had arisen, and in two minutes more, a signal would have been given for the whole army to rise and form. At that moment the guard were killed by arrows, and the savages headed by the prophet himself, rushed so furiously to the attack, with tremendous yells, that some of them entered the camp, before many of our men could get out of their tents. The troops were quickly formed, and Governor Harrison, immediately in person, repaired to the point of attack, and ordered two companies to the support of the assailed whose lines had become broken. The Indians being repulsed in this quarter, commenced a heavy fire upon the left of the front line of Infantry, under the command of Major Floyd. In a moment Governor Harrison threw himself at their head, and perceiving that the heaviest fire proceeded from some trees about twenty yards in front, ordered Major Davies, a distinguished lawyer and orator, who volunteered for the expedition, to dissolve them with his dragoons. Major Davies gallantly advanced to the attack, but he was mortally wounded, and his party driven back.

Capt. Snelling, at the head of his company, immediately moved forward, when they were dislodged, and driven from their advantageous position. The attack then became general along the left flank, the whole front, the right flank and a part of the rear line, and lasted until about day-break, amid deafening yells and terrible carnage. Governor Harrison went along the lines, encouraging the troops to hold out until day-light, and keep the lines entire, when a general and effectual charge would be made. Foreseeing that the enemy would make the last efforts upon the flanks, reinforced the right and left, and gave orders for the charge as soon as the morning appeared. As was anticipated, the Indians made, just at day-break, a desperate assault upon the right and left flanks, with a savage fury, uncommon even with them. The judgment and foresight of the gallant Harrison, had prepared the troops for their reception at these points. Immediately after the assault, our troops were ordered to charge when the Indians were routed with great slaughter, being driven at the point of the bayonet, by the infantry, and pursued by the dragoons into a marsh, where they could not be followed. In this battle, which resulted in a decisive victory over a savage foe nearly two hundred of our brave troops were either killed or wounded. Gov. Harrison, himself, was shot through the hat, and slightly wounded in his head. The Indians suffered still more; and many of the tribes, disappointed at the result, left the fortunes of the Shawanoe Prophet.

The Legislatures of Indiana and Kentucky, by the following, showed how much the services of this patriot were appreciated at the time.

The following is an extract from a communication of Gen. W. Johnson, *to his excellency*, William Henry Harrison, *Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Indiana Territory, Nov.* 1811.

"Sir:—The House of Representatives of the Indiana Territory, in their own name, and in behalf of their constituents, most cordially reciprocate the congratulations of your Excellency on the glorious result of the late sanguinary conflict with the Shawanoe Prophet, and the tribes of Indians confederated with him; and when we see displayed in behalf of our country, not only the consummate abili-

TIES of the general, but the HEROISM of the man; and when we take into view the benefits which must result to our country, from those exertions, we cannot for a moment withhold the meed of our applause."

The following resolution passed the Kentucky Legislature, Jannary 7, 1812.

"*Resolved*, By the Senate and House of the State of Kentucky, that in the late campaign against the Indians upon the Wabash, Gov. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON has behaved like a Hero, a Patriot and a General; and that his cool, deliberate, skillful and gallant conduct in the battle of Tippecanoe, he well deserves the warmest thanks of his country and the nation."

After this battle, Governor Harrison issued his proclamation for volunteers, and in a few days, more men flocked to his standard than were wanted, and about 1200 from Kentucky returned home, but held themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning. At a call of their beloved HARRISON, says a writer at that time, great numbers of mounted Riflemen, joined him for a term of *forty days*, and found themselves with provisions.

It was the original design of the Government, that Gen. Winchester, a respectable officer and soldier of the Revolution, should have the command of the Northwestern Army. In consequence of which, Gov. Harrison, on his arrival at Fort Wayne, took leave of the army in an affectionate manner, and set out for Indiana Territory, with a body of troops, to break up the settlements of the hostile savages. But President Madison, seeing the confidence the western people reposed in Gov. Harrison, appointed him commander-in-Chief—and his commission reached him a few days after his resignation to Gen. Winchester. From thence commenced one of the most difficult, important, and successful scenes of operation, during the late war.

In the spring of 1813, he commanded the army, and defended Fort Meigs, upon the Maumee, successfully against a large British and Indian force, with a garrison wholly inadequate to the duty, and with a small supply of balls, which fact he kept secret. This defence was amongst the most striking events of the war of 1812, and inspired the Americans with confidence, from one end of the Union to

the other. Niles, in his Register, in giving an account of the defence, says, "We now begin to see the fruition of our hopes in the gallant exertions of the western people and their *beloved chieftain* HARRISON, whose official despatch, will warm the heart of every *American*." A series of disasters on the Canadian frontier, and the clamor of a violent and unprincipled opposition had caused some of the best friends of the country to begin to fear the result. But the gallant defence of Fort Meigs by Harrison, turned back the tide of war, loosened the bonds of that unholy alliance between the British and the Indians, and gave hope and vigor to the armies of the Republic. Gen. Proctor, the commander of the British forces, fled, and 2000 of his Indian allies left the British service, in a state of dissatisfaction at the result.

On the 5th of October, he fought the glorious and memorable battle of the Thames, which drove the enemy from the North Western Territory, and gave security to the inhabitants of the western frontiers. The British and Indians under the command of Gen. Proctor and Tecumseh, had taken up a strong position between the river Thames on one side and a swamp on the other—a beach forest lay in front between the swamp and the river, of about 250 yards in width. In a few moments Gen. Harrison arranged the order of the battle, and by a manœuvre never before tried, routed the British by charging them through the centre of his lines, with his mounted riflemen; General Trotter's brigade of 500 men formed the front line, his right upon the centre and his left upon the swamp. Gen. King's brigade, a second line 150 yards in the rear of Trotter; and Gen. Chiles, as a corps of reserve in the rear of it. These brigades were put under the command of Gen. Henry. Gen. Desha's division was formed between Gen. Trotter and the river Thames. He then directed Col. Johnson's regiment of mounted riflemen to be formed in front of all, in two lines opposite the enemy, and upon the advance of the infantry to take ground to the left, and forming upon the flank, to endeavor to turn the right of the Indians. A moment's reflection convinced Gen. Harrison, that, from the thickness of the woods, and the swampiness of the ground, they would be rendered useless on horseback. There was

no time to dismount and place their horses in security. He therefore determined to break the British lines, at once, by a charge of mounted infantry. The measure was not sanctioned by any precedent; but knowing the character of the back-woodsmen, and that a musket or rifle was no impediment to them on horseback, he was persuaded that the enemy would be quite unprepared for the shock, and could not resist it. He therefore, directed that the mounted regiment should be drawn up in close column, and charge, with rifles at full speed, upon the enemy as soon as they had delivered their first fire. The venerable Gov. Shelby, at the age of sixty-six, was posted to command the wing near the river, while Gen. Haarison placed himself at the head of the front line of infantry, to direct the movements of the cavalry and give them the necessary support. Commodore Perry, the hero of Lake Erie, and Brig. Gen. Cass, now Secretary of War, volunteered as Aid-de-camps to Gen. Harrison, and assisted him in the execution of his orders. The army had moved on in this order but a short distance, when the mounted men received the fire of the British line, and were ordered to charge. The horses in front recoiled at the fire of the enemy. Another fire came from the British line. The whole American column moved vigorously to the attack—the mounted riflemen charged with impetuosity, and in a moment the American column broke through the enemy with irresistible force. The British officers seeing no hopes of reducing their broken ranks to order, and the mounted men wheeling upon them and pouring in a destructive fire, surrendered. Upon the left the contest was more severe with the Indians. Col. Johnson commanded on that flank of his regiment, and received and returned a tremendous fire. The Indians also attacked the right, but Gov. Shelby brought up a regiment to its support, and the enemy receiving a severe fire on the front by the division under General Harrison in person, retreated with precipitation. The whole British force was taken prisoners; Gen. Proctor, with a few others, alone escaping by the fleetness of their horses. Such is a brief account of Harrison's victory on the banks of the Thames. It drove the enemy from our borders in the west, and restored a province lost by the treachery of Hull.

After the war, Gen. Harrison retired from the army to his residence a few miles below Cincinnati, upon the banks of the Ohio. Here, like Cincinnatus, he cultivated his farm for his support, beloved by his friends and honored by his country. But he was not long suffered to remain in private life.

He was elected to represent the congressional district composed of Hamilton county and the city of Cincinnati in the councils of the nation, in 1816; and while there, endeavored to call the attention of the national legislature to a better organization of the militia. Considering the militia the only real republican defence of the nation against foreign invasion and domestic insurrection, he advocated a plan of encouragement calculated to raise this right arm of national strength in public estimation. But the nation was not then prepared to make the reform. Upon the news of the death of the brave Kosciusko, the companion of Washington in the revolution, and the hero who fell covered with wounds, for Polish liberty; he offered a resolution of respect to his memory, and supported his resolution in a beautiful and classical speech, which is recorded in Nile's Register for 1817, and which does great credit to him as a speaker. At the end of his Congressional term he declined a re-election, and retired again to his farm. But in 1822, he was elected to represent the State of Ohio in the Senate of the United States, and continued in that body until 1828, where he fully sustained his high reputation. Coming into Congress at the close of the war and continuing, either in the house or the senate, about eight years, he assisted to bring the country into a train of measures which restored the finances, which had become distracted during the contest with Great Britain, built up our domestic industry, and commenced that system of internal improvement which has in so short a period, changed the face of our country.

In 1828 and '9, he represented the country, as Minister to the Republic of Columbia, and since his return, has retired to his residence upon the banks of the Ohio, and literally, like the illustrious Roman, gone back to his plough, and from the industry of *his own hands*, supported a large family, which chance and misfortune have made dependant

upon him. He is represented as one of the most practical farmers in Hamilton County.

Such are the outlines of Gen. Harrison's services. The details of it may be found in the history of the country.—He rose from his own merit, his activity, his fearlessness, his integrity, step by step to one of the highest stations in the army, to the highest civil trusts, and has always filled every station with dignity, ability and success.

Although lightly made, and effeminate in appearance when young, yet he strengthened by hardships, and hardened in the service. He has borne more hardships than most soldiers that served under him. He never slept more than four or five hours when near an enemy. During the siege of Fort Meigs, which continued a week, he had only one hour's sleep each night, and sometimes not even that. During the last campaign, which terminated in the victory of the Thames, his bedding was a single blanket fastened over his saddle, and even this he gave up to a wounded officer. Although possessed of an ardent temperament and great decision of character, he is generous, kind, and never revengeful. He is proverbially strict, prompt and exact in all his public and private duties. He was beloved by his soldiers; and where he resides, has from the earliest times, possessed great popularity. As a soldier, he was brave, vigilant, prudent and successful; as a statesman, he has been sagacious, useful, and wise; in private life, respected and beloved. HIS MORAL CHARACTER IS WITHOUT REPROACH. Although a brave and successful commander, *no man can accuse him of one disobedience to the laws, or of one violation of the constitution of his country.* He possesses the true bravery of the school of Washington, for cruelty and violence never found a place in his character. His services have been many, his sufferings great, and verily he deserves the gratitude of his countrymen. Such is an imperfect sketch of the public services of that patriot and statesman, Gen. WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

LETTER,

Addressed by WILLIAM H. HARRISON, *to* SIMON BOLIVER, *President Liberator of Columbia, when he was about to assume Despotic Power.*

BOGOTA, 27th Sept, 1829.

SIR,—If there is any thing in the style, the matter, or the object of this letter, which is calculated to give offence to your Excellency, I am persuaded you will readily forgive it, when you reflect on the motives which induced me to write it. An old soldier could possess no feelings but those of the kindest character, towards one who has shed so much lustre on the profession of arms; nor can a citizen of the country of Washington cease to wish that, in Bolivar, the world might behold another instance of the highest military attainments, united with the purest patriotism, and the greatest capacity for civil Government.

Such, sir, have been the fond hopes, not only of the People of the United States, but of the friends of liberty throughout the world. I will not say that your Excellency has formed projects to defeat these hopes. But there is no doubt, that they have not only been formed, but are, at this moment, in progress to maturity, and openly avowed by those who possess your entire confidence. I will not attribute to these men impure motives; but can they be disinterested advisers? Are they not the very persons who will gain most by the proposed change? who will, indeed, gain all that is to be gained, without furnishing any part of the equivalent? That *that*, the price of their future wealth and honors, is to be furnished exclusively by yourself? And of what does it consist? Your great character. Such a one, that, if a man were wise, and possessed of the empire, of the Cæsars, in its best days, he would give all to obtain. Are you prepared to make this sacrifice, for such an object?

I am persuaded that those who advocate these measures, have never dared to induce you to adopt them, by any argument founded on your personal interests; and that to succeed, it would be necessary to convince you that no other course remained, to save the country from anarchy. This is the question, then, to be examined.

Does the history of this country, since the adoption of

the Constitution, really exhibit unequivocal evidence that the People are unfit to be free? Is the exploded opinion of a European Philosopher, of the age, that, "in the new hemisphere, man is a degraded being," to be renewed, supported by the example of Columbia? The proofs should, indeed be strong, to induce an American to adopt an opinion so humiliating.

Feeling always a deep interest in the success of the Revolutions in the late Spanish America, I have never been an inattentive observer of events, pending, and posterior to the achievement of its independence. In these events, I search, in vain, for a single fact to show that, in Columbia, at least, the state of society is unsuited to the adoption of a free Government. Will it be said that a free Government did exist, but, being found inadequate to the objects for which it had been instituted, it had been superceded by one of a different character with the concurrence of the majority of the People.

It is the most difficult thing in the world for me to believe that a People in the possession of their rights, as freemen, would ever be willing to surrender them, and submit themselves, to the will of a master. If any such instances are on record, the power thus transferred has been in a moment of extreme public danger, and, then limited to a very short period. I do not think that it is by any means certain, that the majority of the French People, favored the elevation of Napoleon to the throne of France. But, if it were so, how different were the circumstances of that country, from those of Columbia, when the Constitution of Cucuta was overthrown. At the period of the elevation of Napoleon to the first Consulate, all the powers of Europe were the open or secret enemies of France—civil war raged within her borders; the hereditary king possessed many partisans in every province; the People, betrayed by the factions which murdered and succeeded each other, had imbibed a portion of their ferocity, and every town and village, witnessed the indiscriminate slaughter of both men and women, of all parties and principles. Does the history of Colombia, since the expulsion of the Spaniards, present any parallel to these scenes? Her frontiers have been never seriously menaced —no civil war has raged—not a portion of her former Gov-

ernment was to be found in the whole extent of her territory—no factions contended with each other for the possession of power ; the Executive Government remained in the hands of those to whom it had been committed by the People, in a fair election. In fact, no People ever passed from under the yoke of a despotic Government, to the enjoyment of entire freedom, with less disposition to abuse their newly acquired power, than those of Colombia. They submitted, indeed, to a continuance of some of the most arbitrary and unjust features which distinguished to former Government. If there was any disposition on the part of the great mass of the People, to effect any change in the existing order of things ; if the Colombians act from the same motives and upon the same principles which govern mankind elsewhere, and in all ages, they would have desired to take from the Government a part of the power, which, in their inexperience, they had confided to it. The monopoly of certain articles of agricultural produce, and the oppressive duty of the Alcavala, might have been tolerated, until the last of their tyrants were driven from the country. But when peace was restored, when not one enemy remained within its borders, it might reasonably have been supposed that the People would have desired to abolish these remains of arbitrary Government, and substitute for them some tax more equal and accordant with republican principles.

On the contrary, it is pretended, that they had become enamored with these despotic measures, and so disgusted with the freedom they did enjoy, that they were more than willing to commit their destinies to the uncontrolled will of your Excellency. Let me assure you, sir, that these assertions will gain no credit with the present generation, or with posterity. They will demand the facts, which had induced a People, by no means deficient in intelligence, so soon to abandon the principles for which they had so gradually fought, and tamely surrender that liberty, which had been obtained at the expense of so much blood. And what facts can be produced? It cannot be said that life and property were not as well protected, under the Republican Government, as they have ever been ; nor that there existed any opposition to the Constitution and law, too strong for the ordinary powers of the Government to put down.

If the insurrection of General Paez, in Venezuela, is adduced, I would ask, by what means was he reduced to obedience? Your Excellency, the legitimate head of the Republic, appeared, and, in a moment, all opposition ceased, and Venezuela was restored to the Republic. But, it is said, that this was effected by your personal influence, or the dread of your military talent, and that, to keep General Paez, and other ambitious chiefs, from dismembering the Republic, it was necessary to invest your Excellency with the extraordinary powers you possess. There would be some reason in this, if you had refused to act without these powers; or having acted, as you did, you had been unable to accomplish any thing without them. But you succeeded, completely, and there can be no possible reason assigned, why you would not have succeeded, with the same means, against any future attempt of General Paez, or any other General.

There appears, however, to be one sentiment, in which all parties unite; that is, that as matters now stand, you alone can save the country from ruin, at least, from much calamity. They differ, however, very widely, as to the measures to be taken to put your Excellency in the way to render this important. The lesser, and more interested party, is for placing the Government in your hands for life; either with your present title, or with one which it must be confessed, better accords with the nature of the powers to be exercised. If they adopt the less offensive title, and if they weave into their system some apparent check to your will, it is only for the purpose of masking, in some degree, their real object; which is nothing short of the establishment of a despotism. The plea of necessity, that eternal argument of all conspirators, ancient or modern, against the rights of mankind, will be resorted to, to induce you to accede to their measures; and the unsettled state of the country, which has been designedly produced by them, will be adduced as evidence of that necessity.

There is but one way for your Excellency to escape from the snares which have been so artfully laid to entrap you, and that is, to stop short in the course which, unfortunately, has been already commenced. Every step you advance, under the influence of such councils, will make retreat more

difficult, until it will become impracticable. You will be told that the intention is only to vest you with authority to correct what is wrong in the Administration, and to put down the factions, and, that, when the country once enjoys tranquility, the Government may be restored to the People. Delusive will be the hopes of those who rely upon this declaration. The promised hour of tranquility will never arrive. If events tend to produce it, they would be counteracted by the Government itself. It was a strong remark of a former President of the United States, that, "Sooner will the lover be contented with the first smiles of his mistress, than a Government cease to endeavor to preserve and extend its powers." With whatever reluctance your Excellency may commence the career; with whatever disposition to abandon it when the objects for which it was commenced have been obtained; when once fairly entered, you will be borne along by the irresistible force of pride, habit of command, and need, for self-preservation; and it will be impossible to recede.

But it is said that it is for the benefit of the People that the proposed change is to be made; and that by your talents and influence, alone, aided by unlimited power, the ambitious chiefs in the different departments are to be restrained, and the integrity of the republic preserved. I have said, and I most sincerely believe, that from the state into which the country has been brought, that you alone can preserve it from the horrors of anarchy. But I cannot conceive that any extraordinary powers are necessary. The authority to see that the laws are executed; to call out the strength of the country to enforce their execution, is all that is required, and is what is possessed by the Chief Magistrate of the United States, and of every other republic; and is what was confided to the Executive, by the Constitution of Cucuta. Would your talents or your energies be impaired in the council, or the field, or your influence lessened, when acting as head of a Republic?

I propose to examine, very briefly, the results which are likely to flow from the proposed change of government: 1st, in relation to the country; and, 2d, to yourself, personally. Is the tranquility of the country to be secured by it? Is it possible for your Excellency to believe, that when

the mask has been thrown off, and the people discover that a despotic government has been fixed upon them, that they will quietly submit to it? Will they forget the pass word which, like the cross of fire, was the signal for rallying to oppose their former tyrants? Will the virgins, at your bidding, cease to chaunt the songs of Liberty, which so lately animated the youth to victory? Was the patriotic blood of Colombia all expended in the fields of Nargas, Bayacan, and Carebobo? The schools may cease to enforce upon their pupils the love of country, drawn from the examples of Cato and the Bruti, Harmodius and Aristogitin, but the glorious example of patriotic devotion, exhibited in your own Hacienda, will supply their place. Depend on it, sir, that the moment which shall announce the continuance of arbitrary power in your hands will be the commencement of commotions which will require all your talents and energies to suppress. You may succeed. The disciplined army, at your disposal may be too powerful for an unarmed, undisciplined, and scattered population; but one unsuccessful effort will not content them, and your feelings will be eternally racked by being obliged to make war upon those who have been accustomed to call you their father, and to invoke blessings on your head, and for no cause but their adherence to principles which you yourself had taught them to regard more than their lives.

If by strong government which the advocates for the proposed change so strenuously recommend, one without responsibility is intended, which may put men to death, and immure them in dungeons, without trial, and one where the army is every thing, and the people nothing, I must say, that, if the tranquility of Colombia is to be preserved in this way, the widest anarchy would be preferable. Out of that anarchy a better government might arrise; but the chains of military despotism once fastened upon a nation, ages might pass away before they could be shaken off.

But I contend that the strongest of governments is that which is most free. We consider that of the United States as the strongest, precisely because it is the most free. It possesses the faculties, equally to protect itself from foreign force and internal convulsion. In both, it has been sufficiently tried. In no country upon the earth, would

an armed opposition to the laws be sooner or more effectually put down. Not so much by the terrors of the guillotine and the gibbet, as from the aroused determination of the nation, exhibiting their strength, and convincing the factious that their cause was hopeless. No, sir, depend upon it, that the possession of arbitrary power, by the government of Colombia, will not be the means of securing its tranquility; nor will the danger of disturbances solely arise from the opposition of the People. The power, and military force which it will be necessary to put into the hands of the Governors of the distant provinces, added to the nature of the country, will continually present to those officers the temptation, and the means to revolt.

Will the proposed change restore prosperity to the country? With the best intentions to do so, will you be able to recall commerce to its shores and give new life to the drooping state of agriculture? The cause of the constant decline, in these great interests, cannot be mistaken. It arrises from the fewness of those who labor, and the number of those who are to be supported by that labor. To support a swarm of luxurious and idle monks, and an army greatly disproportioned to the resources of the country, with a body of officers, in a tenfold degree disproportioned to the army, every branch of industry is oppressed with burdens which deprive the ingenious man of the profits of his ingenuity, and the laborer of his reward. To satisfy the constant and pressing demands which are made upon it, the Treasury seizes upon every thing within its grasp—destroying the very germ of future prosperity. Is there any prospect that these evils will cease with the proposed change? Can the army be dispensed with?—Will the influence of the monks be no longer necessary? Believe me, sir, that the support which the government derives from both these sources, will be more than ever requisite.

But the most important injury is, the effect which this strong government is to have upon the people themselves. Will it tend to move and elevate their character, and fit them for the freedom which it is pretended is ultimately to be bestowed upon them? The question has been answered from the age of humor. Man does not learn under oppression those noble qualities and feelings which fit him

for the enjoyment of liberty—Nor is despotism the proper school in which to acquire the knowledge of the principles of Republican government. A government whose revenues are derived from diverting the very sources of wealth from its subjects, will not find the means of improving the morals and enlightening the minds of the youth, by supporting systems of liberal education; and if it could, it would not.

In relation to the effect which this investment of power is to have upon your happiness and fame, will the pomp and glitter of a court, and the flattery of venal courtiers reward you for your troubles and anxieties attendant upon the exercise of sovereignty, every where and those which flow from your peculiar situation? Or power, supported by the bayonet, for that willing homage which you were wont to receive from your fellow citizens? The groans of a dissatisfied and oppressed people will penetrate the inmost recesses of your palace, and you will be tortured by the reflection, that you no longer possess that place in their affections, which was once your pride and boast, and which would have been your solace under any reverse of fortune. Unsupported by the people, your authority can be maintained, only by the terrors of the sword and the scaffold. And have these ever been successful under similar circumstances? Blood may smother, for a period, but can never extinguish the fire of liberty, which you have contributed so much to kindle in the bosom of every Colombian.

I will not urge as an argument, the personal dangers to which you will be exposed. But I will ask if you could enjoy life, which would be preserved by the constant execution of so many human beings—your countrymen—your former friends and almost your worshippers. The pangs of such a situation will be made more accute, by reflecting on the hallowed motive of many of those who would aim their daggers at your bosom. That like the last of the Romans, they would strike, not from hatred to man, but love to the country.

From a knowledge of our own disposition, and present feelings, your Excellency will not be willing to believe, that you could ever be brought to commit an act of tyrranny, or even to execute justice with unnecessary vigor. But trust

me, sir, that there is nothing more corrupting, or more destructive of the finest and noblest feelings of our nature, than the exercise of unlimited power. The man who, in the beginning of such a career, might shudder at the idea of taking away the life of a fellow being, might soon have his conscience so seared by the repetition of crime, that the agonies of his murdered victims might become music to his soul, and the drippings of the scaffold afford "blood enough to swim in." History is full of such examples.

From this disgusting picture, permit me to call the attention of your Excellency to one of a different character. It exhibits you as the constitutional Chief Magistrate of a free people. Giving to their representatives the influence of your great name and talents, to reform the abuses which in a long reign of tyrranny and misrule, have fastened upon every branch of the administration. The army and its swarm of officers, reduced within the limits of real usefulness, placed on the frontiers, would be no longer permitted to control public opinion, and be the terror of the peaceful citizen. By the removal of this incubus from the treasury, and the establishment of order, responsibility and economy. in the expenditures of the Government, it would soon be enabled to dispense with the odious monopolies, and the duty of the *Alcavala*, which have operated with so malign an effect upon commerce and agriculture, and indeed, upon the revenues which they were intended to augment. No longer oppressed by these shackles, industry would every where revive; the farmer and the artizan, cheered by the prospect of ample reward for their labor, would redouble their exertions; foreigners, with their capital and their skill in the arts would crowd hither, to enjoy the advantage which could scarcely, elsewhere, be found; and Columbia would soon exhibit the reality of the beautiful fiction of Fenelon—Salentum rising from misery and oppression, to prosperity and happiness, under the councils and directions of the concealed goddess.

What objection can be urged against this course? Can any one acquainted with the circumstances of the country, doubt its success, in restoring and maintaining tranquility. The people would certainly not revolt against themselves; and none of the Chiefs who are supposed to be factiously

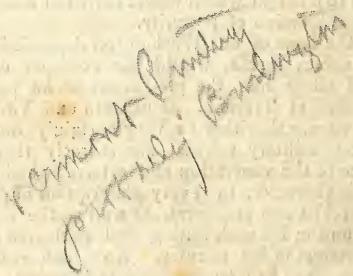
inclined, would think of opposing the strength of the nation when directed by your talents and authority. But it is said, that the want of intelligence amongst the people unfits them for their own Government. Is it not right, however, that the experiment should be fairly tried? I have already said, that this has not been done, For myself, I do not hesitate to declare my firm belief, that it will succeed. The people of Columbia possess many traits of character, suitable to a republican government. A more orderly, forbearing and well disposed people are no where to be met with. Indeed it may safely be asserted, that their faults and vices are attributable to the cursed Government to which they have been so long subjected, and to the intolerant character of the religion, whilst their virtues are all their own. But admitting their present want of intelligence, no one has ever doubted their capacity to acquire knowledge, and under the strong motives which exist, to obtain it, supported by the influence of your Excellency, it would soon be obtained.

To yourself the advantage would be as great as to the country; like acts of mercy, the blessings would be reciprocal; your personal happiness secured, and your fame elevated to a height which would leave but a single competitor in the estimation of posterity.

If the fame of our Washington depended upon his military achievements, would the common consent of the world allow him the pre-eminence he possesses? The victories at Trenton, Monmouth and York, brilliant as they were, exhibiting as they certainly did, the highest grade of military talents, are scarcely thought of. The source of the veneration and esteem which is entertained for his character, by every description of politicians—the monarchist and aristocrat, as well as the republican, is to be found in his undeviating and exclusive devotedness to the interest of his country. No selfish consideration was ever suffered to intrude itself into his mind. For his country he conquerod; and the unrivalled and increasing prosperity of that country is constantly adding fresh glory to his name. General, the course which he pursued is open to you, and it depends upon yourself to attain the eminence which he has reached before you.

To the eyes of military men, the laurels you won on the fields of Vargas, Bayaca, and Carbobo, will be forever green; but will that content you? Are you willing that your name should decend to posterity, amongst the mass of those whose fame has been derived from shedding human blood, without a single advantage to the human race? Or, shall it be united to that of Washington, as the founder and father of agreat and happy people? The choice is before you. The friends of liberty throughout the world, and the people of the United States in particular, are waiting your decision with intense anxiety. Alexander toiled and conquered to attain the applause of the Athenians; will you regard as nothing the opinions of a nation which has evinced its superiority over that celebrated people, in the science most useful to man, by having carried into actual practice a system of government, of which the wisest Athenians had but a glimpse in theory, and considered as a blessing never to be realized, however ardently to be desired. The place which you are to occupy in their esteem depends upon yourself. Farewell.

W. H. HARRISON.



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